



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
August 5-9, 2013

Hundreds of aboriginal youth square off at Alberta Indigenous Games

[Edmonton Journal](#)

August 4, 2013

Alex Migdal



Dancers take part in a powwow after the opening ceremonies for the Alberta Indigenous Games at Poundmaker's Lodge on Sunday in St. Albert. Photograph by: Greg Southam, Edmonton Journal

ST. ALBERT — Cousins Trini Minde, 15, and Michael Paskimen, 14, are both vying for the basketball championship at this week's Alberta Indigenous Games.

But was either of them willing to admit who will prevail in this family showdown?

"I don't know," Paskimen said sheepishly. "Probably Trini, he's taller."

"Nah, Michael's a good player," Minde interjected.

All right, so maybe it's too soon to tell. But Minde is no doubt a formidable opponent, clocking six hours of practice each week and placing third at last year's Indigenous Games basketball finals.

The exchange between the two cousins was fitting for a game that fosters community as much as it does competition. Now in its third year, the Alberta Indigenous Games are drawing hundreds of aboriginal athletes this week from all over the province.

The games kicked off Sunday afternoon with a grand-entry procession that gathered players, elders and dignitaries at the Poundmaker's Lodge, an aboriginal addiction treatment centre.

Drums boomed and bells jingled as dancers clad in traditional aboriginal regalia performed spiritual routines. The procession was preceded by a sacred eagle-staff run, which saw a small group of youth running Sunday morning from Edmonton's Westmount Mall to the Poundmaker's Lodge while carrying a staff. Upon arrival, the staff was placed in the centre of the lodge's arbour.

"It's just a great moment for these young people. It's an experience that they won't be able to have again any time soon," said organizer Allan Ross, who spearheaded the games in 2011.

Ross said youth aged 12-18 can sign up for four team sports (basketball, volleyball, ball hockey and lacrosse) and four individual sports (track, golf, canoeing and archery).

Offering aboriginal youth that kind of alcohol and drug-free activity is critical, said Don Langford, chairman of the Poundmaker's Lodge.

"It teaches them ways of enjoying themselves and a way of getting a good physical activity," he said. "That's part of our culture, which is to follow the medicine wheel, including the spiritual and the physical. And we have to combine those to keep our young adults and certainly our youth from finding other ways of getting high without resorting to drugs and alcohol."

This year's Indigenous Games coincide with the 40th anniversary of the Poundmaker's Lodge, which has always been ahead of its time with Aboriginal addiction work, said Brad Cardinal, the lodge's executive director.

"The powwow is one of the things that we do to engage with our Aboriginal community because we know that that's really important," he said over the drumming and chants. "It gives us the opportunity to have all of the chiefs and the elders of our community to come together. It's a time when we receive validation for the work that we do."

St. Albert was hand-picked as this year's host because of its experience with the Special Olympics games. Mayor Nolan Crouse said the city often also looks for ways to reflect its Métis roots, as the city was established in 1861 as a settlement for Métis parishioners. He also wants the city to be seen as a community that embraces youth and culture.

"These youth are getting role models with their elders. They're getting connected with different communities and they're able to do that through athletics," Crouse said. "I think it's very, very important to continue to build your own persona through a combination of culture and sports."

Bert Bull said he'll be closely watching the games over the coming days. He has coached the games in past years, but was on hand this time to dance in the powwow.

Adorned in a lavish orange, yellow and black-plumed Eagle bustle, Bull reflected on the importance of reminding aboriginal youth of their past — and their future potential.

"This dance here, our powwow, is a celebration of life. Today the sun is shining for us and we're blessed by the creator. It's a good day to celebrate love and make your spirit dance."

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University studies aboriginal kids' needs

[Global Saskatoon](#)

August 3, 2013

KAMLOOPS, B.C. – The B.C. government has appointed a psychologist to lead university researchers studying early childhood development among First Nations in Kamloops.

Rod McCormick will head research teams at Thompson Rivers University, where a search committee recruited him to partner with area native bands.

McCormick has worked with the Canadian Institutes of Mental Health, and his projects have included aboriginal mental health and youth suicide.

Children's Minister Stephanie Cadieux said McCormick's expertise in First Nations mental health will help improve culturally appropriate programs that strengthen the prospects for aboriginal children.

Alan Shaver, president and vice chancellor of the university, said support from the region's aboriginal bands helped attract McCormick to the facility.

McCormick is from the Mohawk First Nations and about 10 per cent of students at the facility are aboriginal, said university spokesman Christopher Seguin.

He said Thomson Rivers offers a community mentorship program and also employs three elders who work at the campus.

"They're a social resource, a connection to their nation," Seguin said.

McCormick's project involves \$2.5 million in funding that's already been announced by the government.

Half the money came from a 2007 early childhood development grant from the Children's Ministry and the rest was from a \$56-million endowment fund created in 2002 with the private sector. Cash has been awarded to 29 post-secondary facilities around the province.

Divorce rule change criticized

[The Star Phoenix](#)

August 6, 2013

Christopher Curtis

Until recently, aboriginal divorce existed in a kind of legal purgatory.

Because family courts are governed by the provinces and aboriginal territory falls under federal jurisdiction, there was a legislative gap that failed to address what happens to homes on First Nations reserves during a divorce. It allowed for a system in which indigenous women in particular were left with little to no legal

recourse in the event they were bilked out of shared property in the aftermath of a messy divorce.

In June, the federal government looked to bridge that gap when it passed Bill S-2: Family Homes on Reserves & Matrimonial Interests or Rights. The law offers First Nations the choice of following a set of federal divorce rules or amending the legislation to suit their customs.

But aboriginal advocates say the bill creates a situation where non-aboriginals could wind up owning houses on First Nations territory.

They also claim S-2 makes it nearly impossible for communities to draft their own laws and some territories, including the South Shore Kahnawake reserve, say they'll simply ignore the bill and enact their own version of it.

"The federal government missed the mark on this one," said Mike Delisle, grand chief of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. "There's a lot of concern, not the least of which is the lack of consultation with this law. There's definitely a problem with the division of property after divorce on First Nations, but the solution has to come from us and not from Ottawa."

The Mohawk council will hold a community meeting later this year to begin the process of creating their own divorce laws - much like the Six Nations Mohawk community did in Ontario in November 2012.

"In the case of someone who 'marries out,' (marries a non-band member) and then there's a divorce, what happens to the home?" Delisle said. "We've already had situations where the home ends up belonging to a non-Native man or woman. If this becomes codified into law, there's a real risk for us here."

Before the bill was passed, there were situations where judges wouldn't overstep their jurisdiction and simply refused to provide a ruling on aboriginal divorces, according to Mohawk lawyer Paula Hill. She says that, in the worst cases, a person could wind up without any kind of compensation for the home or land they lost in a divorce.

"Often times, separation or divorce can bring out the beast in even the most reasonable person," said Hill, who oversaw the creation of the Six Nations' Law Concerning Matrimonial Real Property. "In high-conflict families, the property issue simply remained unresolved, with no judicial option available to seek recourse or to assist in mediating. Specifically at Six Nations, what we would often see is that these homes would be abandoned. Unfortunately, in the highest conflicts, where there's absolute resistance against being reasonable, the home is often not even rented out where profits could be shared."

Hill is currently establishing an arbitration process that would be overseen by members of different Iroquois communities in Ontario and Quebec. When the process is in place, Six Nations Mohawks won't have to go to an outside court to settle the division of property during a separation.

Although Bill S-2 allows for individual communities to amend federal divorce law, Hill says the requirements to make those changes are unrealistic at best.

The law states that 25 per cent of the band's eligible voters must be in favour of the amendments, but even that poses complications. For starters, about 60 per cent of Canada's aboriginal population does not live on reserve and would not be affected by S-2.

"To suggest that we must somehow contact all of these band members and coerce them to vote on a law that absolutely will not impact them is incomprehensible," Hill said. "Aboriginal self-government is a scary word to most Canadians, I understand that. But believe me, it is very scary to us as well. However, if we ever expect to solve Canada's 'Indian Problem' we absolutely must allow the answers to start coming from the nations that suffer through those problems."

Bill S-2 wasn't always so controversial. For a time, the law enjoyed support from the Native Women's Association of Canada, but their enthusiasm for the bill has since waned. In a report issued by NWAC in 2011, the organization's lawyer said S-2 was "inconsistent with the values of First Nations."

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Shingwauk Gathering aims to save language

[Sault Star](#)

August 4, 2013 6:23:25 EDT PM

Sarah Iaconis



Charlotte Contin, a member of Henvey Inlet First Nation, reviews records for St. Joseph Residential School in Spanish, at the second annual Shingwauk Gathering and Conference: Healing and Reconciliation Through Education at Algoma University on Saturday. Contin looked for information about her friend, Christine Roy of West Bay First Nation, who died in the residential school's infirmary.

Patricia Ningewance once thought the Ojibwe language would last forever in her small hometown of Lac Seul. However in changing times, First Nations languages are vulnerable in even the most isolated communities.

The topic of language reclamation was at the heart of the 2013 Shingwauk Gathering and Conference this weekend. Held at Algoma University, the conference discussed traditions, cultures, and histories of First Nations people as well as the impact of residential schools.

One presenter, Patricia Ningewance, has focused her life work on teaching and preserving First Nations languages. On Saturday, she gave a lecture titled Facilitating Fluency at Native Language Camps, Classrooms, and Perhaps at Home.

Ningewance, 62, is Ojibwe from Lac Seul First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. While attending Korah Collegiate in Sault Ste. Marie, she studied French, Latin, and German, which she credits in helping her native language teaching career.

Growing up in a small community, Ningewance has always been fluent in Ojibwe. For many years, the town's seclusion has helped the Ojibwe language survive.

"Where I come from we were very isolated. We didn't have television until 25 years ago or electricity," she said.

Today, she is seeing a loss of this language, even in the most outlying communities.

This is consistent with research from Statistics Canada which says the use of aboriginal languages at home differs based on where people live. A 2011 report says people are more likely to speak their mother tongue when living in an area where the majority of the population speaks a First Nations language.

Contact with bigger cities and exposure to television means that people are less likely to speak their mother tongue.

Ningewance is committed to teaching younger generations Ojibwe. In addition to educating her 15-year-old grandson, she is currently a sessional instructor at the University of Manitoba, a board member of the Indigenous Language Institute in Santa Fe, N.M., and has been travelling throughout Ontario and Manitoba to promote fluency in native language camps.

These camps are often three weeks long, and include approximately 15 students in their late teens or early twenties. These students are fully immersed in Ojibwe.

"You have to facilitate fluency by having students speak to each other," she said. "You have to do it over and over until there is no fear of speaking."

She has also been involved with weekend-long camps, but does not believe these are effective enough to promote fluency. The camps are all local, grassroots efforts for language preservation.

"It's a struggle to keep them. We need to have longer ones, but funding is a problem," said Ningewance.

Her contribution to language reclamation doesn't end there. Ningewance has also published seven books. Her books Talking Gookum's Language-- a Ojibwe language textbook--and Pocket Ojibwe, are acclaimed language learning tools.

Further helping with language preservation, Ningewance's books have also been translated into Cree and Inuktituk. Together, Ojibwe, Cree, and Inuktituk comprise the most common aboriginal languages.

"Hopefully that is my contribution to helping these three languages survive," she said.

Her books have been well-received by those who want to learn Ojibwe, many of whom are in their twenties and younger.

"It's very encouraging," she said.

Ningewance believes this revival of interest came after the threat of almost losing the language.

"We were too complacent before," she added.

Worldwide, Ojibwe has 86,500 speakers, says language statistics website Ethnologue. A 2011 census from Statistics Canada reports 19,275 speakers in the country.

Despite being one of the most spoken First Nations languages in North America, Ojibwe is listed as threatened under Ethnologue.

In light of this, Ningewance continues to emphasize the importance of language preservation.

"The culture, the entire worldview is contained in that language. The way you feel and think is all connected to the language."

TRC explores Canada's archives for first time: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada given \$400,000 to explore Health Canada records

[CBC News](#)

Posted: Aug 6, 2013 4:40 PM CT



A nurse takes a blood sample from a boy at the Indian School in Port Alberni, B.C., in 1948, during a period when nutritional experiments were being conducted on students there and in five other residential schools.
(Library and Archives Canada/Canadian Press)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is heading into the federal government's archives Tuesday to gather more of the 3.5 million documents related to residential schools.

At first, the federal government refused to give the TRC access to all federal residential school documents, but in January, a judge ordered the government to hand over all relevant documents.

"We want to know the truth," said Terri Brown, a member of the Tahltan First Nation and a survivor from a residential school system in Whitehorse.

"We were really like little robots doing what people told us to do. We didn't have a choice. And whatever was conducted in there, whatever happened, as painful as it may be, we need to know that information because it can help us in the future."

The federal government has given the TRC \$400,000 to pay a small team to dig through photographs and documents from Health Canada. But those are just a portion of the close to 3.5 million federal archive documents now accessible to the TRC.

Murray Sinclair, the commission's chair, is concerned there might not be enough time to get all the work done by June 2014, when the TRC's mandate is supposed to be complete.

"But the question now is whether they have enough time and enough resources within the time left in our mandate," said Sinclair.

Kathleen Mahoney, a law professor at the University of Calgary, says obtaining more documents from the federal archives is important when acknowledging this part of Canadian history.

"In the spirit of reconciliation, Canada, the churches and the First Nations should look at this together and really get to the bottom and move forward in acknowledgement that these things occurred with the motivation that they will never, ever, ever happen again."

Stronger case for genocide, activist says

First Nations leaders and activists say documents collected the federal archives could build a stronger case for genocide in Canada.

"Even with what we have - minus the releasing documents - there is certainly enough to suggest that Canada was involved in genocidal policies," said Bernie Farber, former head of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

He's concerned the recent release of archival records wouldn't have happened without the court order back in January. He says that could mean there's something in those archives the government doesn't want the public to see.

"We are hearing that the government has been kind of hoarding all the documents and giving them out very slowly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We think that all the documents should be released."

Faber and others, including Phil Fontain, former leader of the Assembly of First Nations, want the history of residential schools to be seen as genocide. They want the United Nations to press the federal government to officially recognize that.

Farber says First Nations could present their case to the UN as early as next month.

'Indian Residential Schools' or 'Settler Colonial Genocide'? Native group slams human rights museum over exhibit wording

[National Post](#)

August 6, 2013

Jake Edmiston



Wayne Glowacki/Winnipeg Free Press/Files The Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg is not set to open until 2014 but has already attracted controversy.

Aboriginal chiefs in Manitoba are angry that a Winnipeg museum has scratched the word "genocide" from an exhibition about Canada's treatment of aboriginal.

The digital sign — meant to attract visitors to an exhibition at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights when it opens in 2014 — was at one point slated to label human rights violations against First Nations as genocide but the museum's steering committee changed its mind after deciding "we're not in the position to make declarations of genocide," a spokeswoman said.

Upon learning of the change, the Southern Chiefs Organization lashed out at the museum's CEO in a letter Friday, claiming the move "is a clear demonstration of the insincerity and populist agenda of the federal government."

It accused the museum of "sanitizing the true history of Canada's shameful treatment of First Nations."

According to the letter, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs pledged \$1-million in donations to the museum "with the understanding that history of the treatment of First Nations people would be on exhibit."

"Use the proper term of genocide as this is exactly what has been done and is currently being done," Grand Chief Murray Clearsky wrote.

He urged that the sign, now simply "Indian Residential Schools", be changed back to "Settler Colonial Genocide".

On Tuesday, the Southern Chiefs Organization said there were no plans to withdraw funding and the letter was not meant as a threat.

While the museum — a Crown corporation — has a board of trustees and president appointed by the federal government, spokeswoman Maureen Fitzhenry said the decision to avoid the word genocide was made without input from any federally appointed representative. As well, she said, donors have no bearing on content decisions.

"The idea that we rejected the whole concept of genocide is not correct," Ms. Fitzhenry said, adding that First Nations' claims of genocide will be covered in the exhibition, which is meant to focus on "breaking the silence on gross violations of human rights."

'We're not declaring it as genocide. We're not declaring it as not genocide'

"We're not declaring it as genocide. We're not declaring it as not genocide. ... We feel that visitors will be encouraged to come to their own conclusions on what constitutes genocide," Ms. Fitzhenry said.

The museum, which is not scheduled to open until late 2014, will consist of 12 exhibitions — each with some focus on First Nations.

Museum staff say they plan on meeting with First Nations chiefs in the coming weeks to discuss the concerns.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister's Office deferred questions to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, whose spokesman would not comment.

But Jason MacDonald did say that it "is not clear to me upon what grounds they'd make that assertion" that the decision was politically motivated.

The United Nations defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group" — which specifically includes, killing; causing seriously bodily or mental harm; inflicting conditions of life

on a group meant to “bring about its physical destruction”; imposing measures to prevent births; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

“Historical and current processes imposed [against First Nations] fit the definition of genocide to a tee,” Chief Clearsky wrote. “Sanitizing this will only make a festering wound more endemic and will only ensure racism will be allowed to grow.”

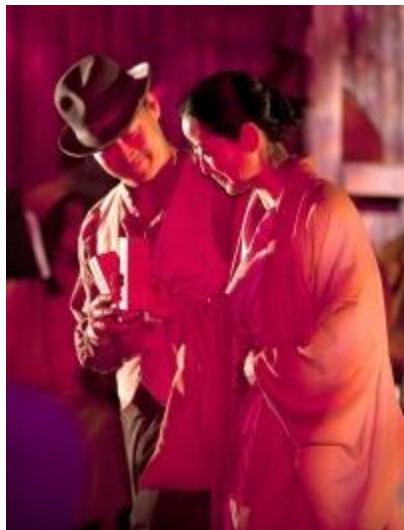
While the museum situation has drawn attention to the indigenous claims of genocide, UN Human Rights Officer Leonardo Castilho said the concept is far from new in North and South America.

Salmon Row history still speaks to our times

[Straight.com](#)

Aug 7, 2013 at 10:14 am

Glenda Bartosh



*Testuro Shigematsu and Donna Yamamoto.
Tim Matheson*

With recent news of the federal government once having used First Nations kids for nutritional experiments, companies importing low-cost temporary foreign workers, and people marking the 70th anniversary of Japanese internment, you could easily have a “back to the future” flashback watching the latest version of *Salmon Row*.

The first production, mounted in 2011 at the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site in Steveston, struck so many chords past and present that the entire run sold out in four days.

Now *Salmon Row* is back for an encore, thanks to \$100,000 in funding from the City of Richmond. With a bit of fine-tuning it’s more timely than ever, telling a tale that’s been quietly ignored for decades: how a rich resource—salmon—attracted people from all over the world to the banks of the Fraser River, triggering enormous conflict.

“It always really surprises me that we don’t know our history. These stories are so dramatic and, as Canadians, we just don’t mythologize ourselves,” says playwright Nicola Harwood by phone from her Vancouver home.

Commissioned by the Mortal Coil Performance Society, the theatre company known for site-specific, multimedia productions like the Stanley Park Ghost Train and Bright

Nights events, Harwood spent two-and-a-half years researching and writing the script.

Salmon Row follows the complex narratives that unfolded along racial and gender lines in the canneries and on fishing boats from the late 1800s to right before World War II and the Japanese internment, as people struggled to make a living off the salmon.

When pressures on the resource increased, so did the conflicts, especially given legislation that blocked First Nations from fishing—their traditional livelihood—and restricted where Chinese and Japanese could live and work.

Allegiances could come and go, too, sometimes as slippery as the fish. “There were strikes, huge strikes, between the cannery owners and the fishermen, and between the cannery owners and the cannery workers,” says Harwood. “With very strong, discrete communities out there—the Japanese, white, and aboriginal men fishing, the Chinese and aboriginal women primarily working in the canneries, and the European workers and cannery bosses—the ethnic divisions would be used in labour conflicts to whoever’s advantage they worked the most.”

Discrimination, mail-order Asian brides, drugs, union-busting: the fallout of the realpolitik that still haunts life in resource-rich B.C. plays out among the empty buildings and creaking floorboards of the abandoned shipyard.

The earthy smell of the river and running lights of passing fishing boats add authentic notes to the production, as do the costumes, which earned a 2011 Jessie nomination, and the characters—some of whom are based on real-life individuals.

Donna Yamamoto’s Sumi is drawn from Asayo Murakami, a “picture bride” ordered from Japan who refused to marry her intended. The Murakami House still stands near the shipyard, part of the careful site restoration the City of Richmond has been doing for the past 20 years.

Jim Preston plays Ling Lam, who came to Canada as penniless as anyone and eventually opened the first general store in Steveston. (You can see a replica of his store at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, just down the road from the shipyard.) Ling eventually became a “China boss”, helping Chinese immigrants when he could, but also a businessman who was hard on employees.

“As I read the character, I felt a real kinship with him and wanted to make him my own,” says Preston by phone from her Vancouver home.

“The Chinese half of my family came to Canada about the same time Ling Lam would have,” he adds. “My grandparents both worked on the railway and my

parents served in the Second World War, so I feel like I'm telling their story when I work on this."

Salmon Row takes place at the Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site from next Thursday (August 15) until September 1.

Aboriginal community caught in middle of corporate lawsuit

[The Globe and Mail](#)

Aug. 06 2013, 6:38 PM EDT

Jacquie McNish



A unique plastics venture on a First Nation reserve near Georgian Bay is slated to be closed this week after being caught in the crossfire of a furious legal battle between a prominent Canadian industrialist and his former company.

"Husky is getting back at me," said Robert Schad, the 85-year-old founder of Husky Injection Molding Systems Ltd., Canada's largest maker of plastic moulding machines.

Mr. Schad sold Husky in 2007, but he remained chairman of a plastics company called Niigon Technologies Ltd., which he personally financed at the Moose Deer Point First Nation in MacTier, Ont., and stocked with Husky machinery.

Days after he launched a separate plastics venture with an Italian partner in December, 2012, Mr. Schad said Husky told managers at Niigon that it was pulling out the plastic injection machines that the company had lent or leased to the facility years earlier. Husky has sued Mr. Schad and the Italian partner, citing violations of confidentiality agreements in connection with the Niigon operation.

Husky's move to reclaim the moulding machines effectively forces the closing of the Niigon plant, eliminating 25 jobs in a community of about 450 residents.

The shuttering of the plant – a bright, modern facility surrounded by foliage in the centre of Moose Deer Point – is an abrupt end to a source of community stability and pride.

Sarah Middlebrooks, 38, a single mother of five, joined Niigon in 2006, starting as a janitor, and quickly moved up to be warehouse assistant, often managing shipping logistics. The company was far more than a source of income for her; thanks to its focus on education and robust benefits plan, she is less than a year away from getting her high-school equivalency diploma, and she has been able to afford dental care, including braces, for her children.

"I wanted to retire from here," Ms. Middlebrooks said in an interview at the factory, fighting back tears. "I wanted to see my kids have the opportunity that I had."

Niigon became a major part Ms. Middlebrooks's family. Her mother, one of its first employees, worked there until her death earlier this year. Her brother once worked there, too, and her two sons shadowed workers in the factory, hoping to eventually get jobs there.

"Niigon gave me an opportunity to make a living," she said. "I'm not living paycheque to paycheque – I have a bank account, I went on vacation. It gave me more than just a job."

"I hoped to work here for the rest of my life," quality technician Tori Cress said. "There's a sense of family here you don't get anywhere else."

Mr. Schad donated \$28-million from his charitable foundation and personal savings to launch Niigon Technologies Ltd., which is wholly owned by the First Nations reserve.

Niigon has been in business since 2001, making everything from tomato-vine clips for farmers to plastic moulds for manufacturers in the United States. It is one of a few manufacturing plants owned by aborigines in Canada and it has been championed as a model of corporate and community partnerships.

"There is nothing like this in Canada. It was such a huge leap forward for this community," said Bob Dickson, Niigon's first general manager who is now the chief executive officer of Attawapiskat Resouces Inc., a First Nation mining services company in Northern Ontario.

Peter Kendall, director of Niigon, and executive director of the Schad Foundation, said the plant's closing is "devastating for us. It's not just about the company, it's pride in the community about the company."

The foundation, based in Vaughan, Ont., has also financed numerous other ventures in Moose Deer Point, including \$2-million for a child development facility.

Mr. Schad said it "is hard for me to understand" Husky's decision. "Perhaps it is because they knew the importance of Niigon to me personally."

Husky filed a lawsuit in May against Mr. Schad, his Italian partner SIPA SpA and other associates, seeking more than \$100-million in damages for allegedly violating confidentiality agreements with the launch of their new venture. The claim alleges that Mr. Schad "improperly" used his position on Niigon's board of directors to obtain confidential information about new Husky machine prototypes shared with the First Nation's plant.

Mr. Schad and his partners have filed a counterclaim denying the allegations.

It is not uncommon to see companies squabble with former officials over the alleged misuse of proprietary information. What is unusual about Husky's legal fight is that it pits Mr. Schad against his former son-in-law: Husky chief executive officer John Galt.

The collateral damage in the messy fight is a native community that struggles with 65-per-cent unemployment when its busy summer marina is closed after the summer season. Moose Deer Point owns two machines of the seven they previously operated, and might be able to use them after Niigon shuts down, but any new operations would be significantly scaled down.

Mr. Galt was not available for comment. In a statement e-mailed to The Globe and Mail, Husky vice-president and general counsel Michael McKendry said the company is committed to protecting its inventions and knowledge and its litigation against Mr. Schad involves Niigon.

"Husky has provided significant financial and technical support to Niigon over many years and regrets that its relationship with Niigon has ended in these circumstances. As this matter is now before the court, we cannot provide any further comment," he said.

Husky is currently privately owned by a handful of institutional investors, including the private equity arm the of Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System.

Mr. Schad said he is currently working with the federal and Ontario governments to help the community adjust to the loss of jobs. He said the Schad Foundation has paid most of the \$4-million bill for severance payments to workers slated to lose jobs.

The Moose Deer Point employees, however, believe they are losing more than that. "What we have here is stability and comfort," Ms. Middlebrooks said. "To us, it's not just a job. It's Niigon."

First Nations want equal partnership in west-east pipeline: New Brunswick First Nations expect to be among the first to be consulted on pipeline project

[CBC News](#)

Aug 7, 2013 11:40 AM AT



TransCanada is expected to file its regulatory application with the National Energy Board by the end of the year. (CBC)

First Nations in New Brunswick expect to have their conditions met before TransCanada Corp. is given permission to proceed with its \$12-billion west-east pipeline project.

The Energy East pipeline proposal, which still needs regulatory approval, would send 1.1 million barrels of oil per day from Western Canada to refineries and export terminals in Eastern Canada.

TransCanada is expected to file its regulatory application with the National Energy Board by the end of the year. It anticipates it will take 24 months to move through the process, and promises to engage with First Nations and other communities before construction would begin.

'There need to be absolute guarantees that the environment can be protected in this project.'—*Kelly Lamrock, lawyer, Assembly of First Nations of N.B.*

The Assembly of First Nation's Chiefs released a statement [on Thursday](#), saying the pipeline must satisfy their concerns before it moves ahead.

The association said the pipeline must ensure:

- Full protection of the environment.
- Full protection of the ability to exercise aboriginal and treaty rights.
- Meaningful participation of First Nations in the management of any pipeline and all benefits arising from it.



New Brunswick Premier David Alward has been a strong advocate for the proposed west-east TransCanada pipeline project. (CBC)

Lawyer Kelly Lamrock, who represents the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs in New Brunswick, said governments have a legal duty to consult with First Nations.

"The government has to recognize the First Nations treaty rights that exist here, including the right to be consulted," said Lamrock.

"There need to be absolute guarantees that the environment can be protected in this project."

Assembly will also address marine terminal

Joanna Bernard, chief of the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, said she is in support of the pipeline if it can be done safely.

"The concern is always the environment and safety and making sure we protect mother earth. And that's the bottom line for a lot of First Nations people," said Bernard.

Members of the assembly said they plan to release another statement later in the week.

It's expected it will concern the proposed \$300-million deep water [marine terminal](#), a joint venture by TransCanada and Irving Oil Ltd., and its possible impacts on wildlife in the Bay of Fundy.

Design work on the marine terminal, which would be located adjacent to Irving Oil's existing import terminal, is expected to begin in 2015.

Irving Oil says the terminal's construction will create "hundreds of jobs" and the facility will employ up to 50 people once it is finished.

TransCanada said it would start seeking regulatory approvals on the pipeline in 2014 and the oil could start flowing to Eastern Canada by late 2017.

The company proposes to convert roughly 3,000 kilometres of natural gas pipeline on its existing Canadian Mainline route so it can carry crude oil.

It says it would also construct 1,400 kilometres of new pipeline to carry crude oil into Saint John, where it will end at the Canaport LNG terminal.

PAGC, FSIN work on education act

[The StarPhoenix](#)

August 8, 2013

Betty Ann Adam



FSIN Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron, right, and Gerry Hurton, interim director of education for the FSIN, participate in a conference on a First Nations education act on Wednesday. Photograph by: Greg Pender, The Starphoenix, The Starphoenix

Northern Saskatchewan First Nations are working this week on creating education legislation to assert their right to control their own education systems and demand equitable funding.

Members of the First Nations that comprise the Prince Albert Grand Council, along with their directors of education, are working with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to specify the rules they'll use to govern education for First Nations, FSIN Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron said.

"We're saying, 'Here's our treaty right to education and we're asserting it by implementing our own education act that's going to suit our own community's needs,'" Cameron said.

At the same time, First Nations will continue to demand the federal government fund on-reserve schools at levels comparable to provincially funded offreserve schools, "until the federal government finally realizes and says (we) have a treaty right to education that is of international law and is unbreakable (by) the feds or the provincial governments and that they're going to honour and implement the treaty right to education," Cameron said.

"The consistent message is comparable funding for our Indian communities' (schools) of Saskatchewan."

The template for the First Nation legislation is an act created in 1984 by former FSIN chief Sol Sanderson and his wife Carole Sanderson, an education specialist. "They were looking years and years ahead. We look back to this day, had our communities done that since 1984, maybe the issue of comparable funding would have been addressed by now," Cameron said.

Sol Sanderson remains involved in the work through the FSIN, Cameron added.

First Nations will have to act quickly if they want to have their legislation on the table before the federal government releases its draft legislation of an Indian Education Act that First Nations see as an encroachment upon their inherent right to control their own schooling.

Sen. Harry Cook said the expected mid-October release of the federal draft legislation is a difficult deadline to meet because each First Nation is autonomous and has its own particular needs.

The federal government needs to respect First Nations, who are partners with the Crown and signed the treaties as equals, he said.

"Their obligation, based on the treaty with the Crown, has to be ... 'we do not control these people. We have to work with these people and they have to agree together with us to go forward with any process that we should undertake as a country,'" Cook said.

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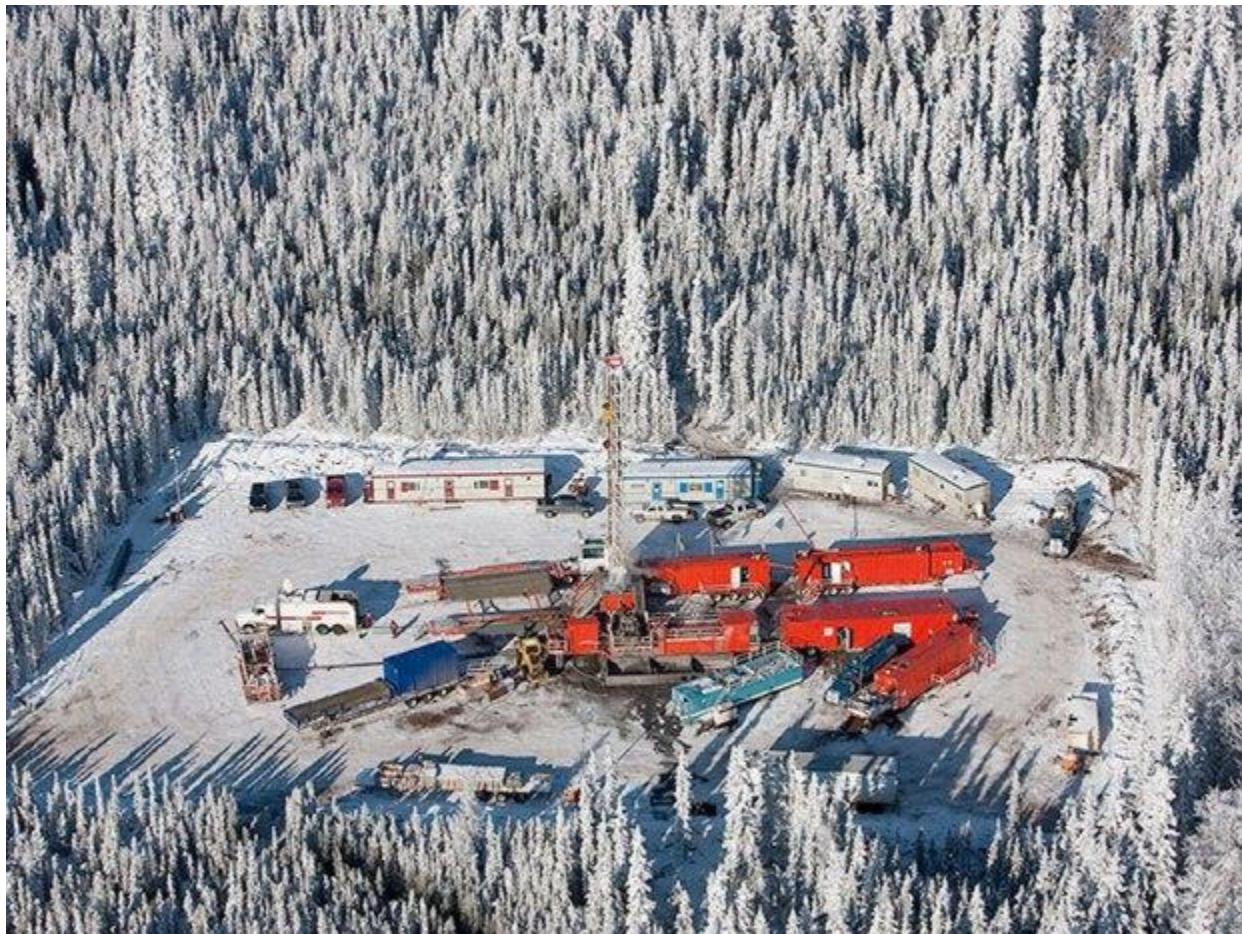
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Dover oil sands project approval shows limits of First Nations agenda

[National Post](#)

August 8, 2013

Claudia Cattaneo



Handout/DoverAthabasca proposed to develop its flagship oil sands leases in phases to a maximum capacity of 250,000 barrels a day with partner PetroChina.

In this era of increasing aboriginal empowerment over resource development, approval of the Dover oil sands project by the Alberta Energy Regulator represents a reality check about how far First Nations can push their agendas.

Claudia Cattaneo: Started as an after-thought after the United States delayed approval of Keystone XL, the Alberta-to-New Brunswick pipeline promises the biggest benefits yet to Canadians from its energy patrimony, while ensuring the best environmental protection that can be had.

In a 44-page ruling late Tuesday, the regulator bluntly dismissed the community's claims that the project infringed on its traditional lands and that it required a 20-kilometre "no development" buffer zone.

It's perhaps a politically incorrect ruling, but also one that helps clarify boundaries between the rights of aborigines to preserve their lands and traditional ways and the rights of oil companies to produce oil and economic benefits on crown lands for which they hold valid permits.

"The Panel notes that Fort McKay's traditional lands are large (about 3 526 226 ha) and Dover's project area (38,000 ha) is only a small fraction, about 1% of those lands," it said in its decision, which included 10 conditions related to early progressive reclamation and operations.

"The panel has concluded that Fort McKay members will be able to carry on their traditional activities in other parts of their traditional territory and that the project will not negate the ability of Fort McKay members to continue their traditional activities."

Proponent Athabasca Oil Corp., which could have been wiped out by an adverse ruling, said Wednesday it is eager to move on and start field work on the in-situ development.

"That is the most important part, to avoid losing more time on this project, to get it up and going as soon as possible, and get the job done," Athabasca CEO Sveinung Svarte said in an interview.

Athabasca proposed to develop its flagship oil sands leases in phases to a maximum capacity of 250,000 barrels a day with partner PetroChina.

Provided the project gets final approval from the Alberta cabinet and Alberta Environment, Athabasca plans sell its remaining 40% of the project to PetroChina for \$1.32-billion, as part of a put/call arrangement agreed to in the past.

Athabasca needs the money to fund its other projects. Concerns that the company would run out of cash depressed its share price in recent months. The stock bounced back on the ruling .

Still, with the Fort McKays threatening to appeal, the dispute serves as a reminder to oil sands developers that it's important to go the extra mile to align interests with aborigines who are affected, because the legal route is rocky, costly and uncertain.

The Fort McKay First Nation and Metis Community objected to the project because of its impact on the Moose Lake Reserve and asked for a buffer zone around it to protect it.

In a news release, Chief Jim Boucher said the fight to protect Moose Lake is not over.

"Fort McKay is gearing up to mount a rigorous opposition to the Brion Energy project until a satisfactory solution is found," he said, referring to Dover's new name. "What we are asking for is no different than what the Alberta government recently granted Fort McMurray, which is a buffer zone to separate industrial sites from areas of community activity and residential development. The Brion Energy

project is within 1200 metres of Fort McKay's Moose Lake reserve, which is unacceptable."

The Fort McKays are considering all their options, including appealing the ruling in the courts, said spokeswoman Dayle Hyde.

While the community became wealthy by providing services to oil sands operators, it took a hard line against Dover because it has the resources to do it and because it wants to protect remaining areas in the oil sands region that are culturally and environmentally significant, she said.

Mr. Svarte said project proponents would still like to involve the Fort McKays in the opportunities offered by the development, while the band said it's open to a compromise that protects the Moose Lake lands, suggesting it's time to find a solution that works for everyone, regardless of what regulators ruled.

Educational comic book project to be released in Attawapiskat

[Wawatay News](#)

Thursday August 8, 2013

The comic book will be distributed free-of-charge to schools and libraries across Canada. It will also be available for sale in bookstores nation-wide with all proceeds going to Shannen's Dream. -- THE FALLING OF THE SUN - TM & © 2013 Steve LeBlanc

A 200-page comic book called One Tribe Anthology will be launched March 2013 during the opening of a new elementary school in Attawapiskat First Nation.

The One Tribe Anthology, an all-ages publication, contains comics from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists. It will be distributed free-of-charge to schools and libraries across Canada. It will also be available for sale in bookstores nation-wide with all proceeds going to Shannen's Dream.

James Waley, who is coordinating the project, was inspired to create the anthology after attending a benefit to raise funds for Japan tsunami relief in 2011. Several months later, a state of emergency was called at Attawapiskat First Nation.

"I couldn't help but notice that stuff happening in our own backyard wasn't getting enough attention," Waley said. "I thought I should try to do something. My background has always been in comics; it seemed natural."

To make the project a reality, Waley proceeded to assemble a diverse group of artists who he has encountered and worked with over the last 40 years.

"I wanted to see this nice alliance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal comic creators coming together for a cause," said Waley. "I was so surprised by how much interest there is in comic book making."

"In this day and age, it's a lot to ask people to come onboard," Waley said, grateful for the extensive support he has received on the project.

The anthology will be divided into three sections, which have yet to officially be named, but will be mainly based on Native stories, but include 'other' diverse stories.

Waley's own comic strip is based on a character called 'The Northern Light' who has an enlightening encounter with an Elder.

"It's a meeting of minds," Waley shared. "It's a short story of mutual respect."

Interestingly, Waley learned after writing the story that Shannen Koostachin's spirit name is Woman of the Northern Lights.

Prior to her passing, Shannen Koostachin led a youth driven moment, now known as Shannen's Dream, advocating for equal funding for on-reserve education. On May 30, 2010, Koostachin was tragically killed in a car accident.

Koostachin's dream of making culturally based education in "safe and comfy" schools available for all First Nations children and youth lives on through the foundation Shannen's Dream.

"I'm 100% convinced that they'll be a great recipient of the funds," said Waley.

Chad Solomon, a comic contributor to the anthology, whole-heartedly agreed with Waley.

"It's one of the most worthwhile causes I've heard in a long time," Solomon said. "This is why I'm supporting it."

Solomon, an artist from Henvey Inlet First Nation who currently resides in Peterborough, Ontario, is excited to be part of the project.

"It's an incredible opportunity and experience to share stories," said Solomon. "To get the young, and the young alike, to connect through graphic novels is amazing."

Solomon, who describes his work as "awesome", uses his comics as a way to share valuable cultural lessons.

"I use my work as a way to share traditional teachings which I learned as a kid," Solomon said. "As I learn more, I share more of my story."

To raise printing funds, One Tribe Anthology will be hosting a 60-day Indiegogo campaign beginning August 30. Indiegogo is an online international crowd-funding platform used to raise money.

To learn more about the project, visit www.onetribeanthology.ca or search for the One Tribe Anthology page on Facebook.

City and country meet in Inuit-First Nations youth exchange

[Nunatsiaq News](#)

August 8, 2013

Lisa Gregoire



Trudy Utanaaq, 12, braves the cold waters of Winisk Lake in northern Ontario to take a dip with a life jacket on. Utanaaq was one of 10 Ottawa Inuit who participated in a youth exchange with Webequie First Nation, an Oji-Cree community in northern Ontario. (PHOTO BY FRED SIMPSON)



William and Mikka Komaksuitiksak carry a homemade stretcher they learned how to make during bush survival training near Webequie First Nation in northern Ontario. Inuit youth, on exchange from Ottawa, learned how to thread lifejackets through young birch trunks to make the makeshift stretcher. (PHOTO BY FRED SIMPSON)



Lifetime friendships: in May and June 2013, Inuit youth from Ottawa and Oji-Cree youth from Webequie First Nation participated in a cultural exchange that introduced teenagers from northern Ontario to the bustle of the city and urban Inuit to the slow pace of life in the bush. (PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN CARLETON)

When urban Inuit go on exchange to a remote northern Ontario reserve, they fish, of course and learn how to survive in the forest. When their Oji-Cree counterparts come to Ottawa, they go to the mall.

Through a YMCA youth exchange grant, and months of bake sale fundraising, 10 Ottawa-based Inuit teenagers went on an exchange in May and June with 27 Grade 7 and Grade 8 Oji-Cree youth from Webequie (We-be-kway), an island First Nation of roughly 700 people 550 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

"We knew going into it that it was a small community," said Steven Carleton, 23, a youth program coordinator at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre and one of three chaperones who went to Webequie. "I was anticipating it to be like communities in the North."

He was right: dirt roads, crowded homes, lots of kids and dogs and, of course, a Northern store.

The Inuit youth, aged 13 to 18, did their leg of the exchange second, departing Ottawa on June 1. Their Oji-Cree friends came to visit Ottawa a month earlier, in mid-May.

For many of the Webequie students, it was the first time ever leaving their home community so the first few days in Ottawa were spent just dealing with their culture shock and fear of the city.

Lynda Brown, interim program director at OICC, who helped organize the trip, said there was very little actual "exchange" between the First Nations visitors and Inuit until about mid-week, when they started talking, interacting, sharing Facebook and email addresses and, naturally, flirting.

"My little nephew found himself a girlfriend," said Carleton, smiling.

The Ottawa hosts brought their guests on tours of Parliament Hill, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilization along with trips to Laser Quest for laser tag and to the Rideau Centre mall with its enormous, jaw-dropping Apple computer store.

Much like Nunavummiut, the Oji-Cree pay high prices for food and drink, so they spent their spare time stocking up on their favourite snacks to bring home.

When the Ottawa youth made their 10-hour journey from Ottawa to Toronto to Thunder Bay and, finally, Webequie June 1, they had the advantage of having already met their Oji-Cree friends so it didn't take long to feel at home.

But the Ottawa visitors are used to living in cities, eating well and having plenty of entertainment and stimulation around. Not so on reserve where, like in Nunavut, homes are overcrowded, people eat a lot of processed or deep fried foods and many, including young people, smoke cigarettes.

Steven Carleton's younger brother Mark Carleton, 15, was one of the youth who went to Webequie and while he enjoyed the visit immensely, he admitted he got bored a few times.

Webequie is located on Eastwood Island, one of many islands in Winisk Lake. The Inuit youth spent most of their mornings learning how to bead and make crafts such as dream catchers and their afternoons a boat ride away on forested land to learn survival skills from community elders and teachers.

Mark Carleton, a budding chef known for his delicious cheesecakes, also got to do what he loves most: fish.

"Me and my nephew Brandon Chin, we really enjoy fishing because we've been fishing all our lives," Mark said. He and Chin spent one glorious evening in a motorboat with a Webequie elder named Norman, and Fred Simpson, an OICC elder and chaperone.

"We went out around dusk for three or four hours. There were lots of walleye," he said. "There are so many islands. I felt lost but Norman brought us to a good spot. He said wait until around 7 p.m. and sure enough, right around 7 p.m., we started catching fish. I think we caught 30 in 20 minutes.

"It was so quiet — loons, eagles in trees, the flow of water. It was peaceful and fun. I really enjoyed it."

Trudy Utanaaq, 12, also made the trip to Webequie. She said she loved meeting new people and having new experiences. Despite cool temperatures, Utanaaq was one of the few to go swimming in the lake.

During a special community celebration on the Friday night, Webequie residents asked their guests to share some Inuit culture so several of the boys gave Inuit games demonstrations and Utanaaq and Colleen Sanguya did some throat singing.

Afterward, the Webequie hosts gave their visitors moose hide moccasins and travel mugs as gifts.

Steven Carleton said one memorable moment came when a respected elder from Alberta offered to hold a sweat lodge for guests.

He initially felt claustrophobic and anxious, blaming his "warm Inuk blood," then his nostrils started to hurt from inhaling the hot air. He could only withstand the intense heat for about 10 minutes but it was worth it.

"It was a really interesting experience. It put things into perspective. We gave thanks to the land and the people who came before us. The ceremony helped me see the bigger picture," he said.

From time to time, when discomfort seemed unbearable in the hot lodge, he just let his mind wander a bit.

"I play rugby so I thought about rugby and I thought about my wife," he said laughing. "Just anything to keep from losing it."

Quebec Cree group makes plea to end violence: Ends 96 km walk at Wemindji meeting of Grand Council of the Crees

[CBC News](#)

Aug 8, 2013 12:22 PM CT

A group of Crees is making a plea to put an end to violence in their communities.

About 30 people interrupted the annual general meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees Wednesday in Wemindji, Que.



A group of about 30 Crees walked 96 kilometres over four days to the annual general meeting of the Grand Council of the Crees in Wemindji, Que., to make a plea to end violence in their communities. (photo courtesy of Cheryl Visitor)

Bradley A.J. Georgekish, spokesperson for the campaign against violence, said there should not be any tolerance for violence in Cree villages.

"For every one assault causing injury that is reported, 10 are not reported," he said.

"It is both disheartening and devastating to hear and witness that Crees are killing Crees. Violence is a learned behavior, and we know that learned behaviour can be unlearned. Let's not normalize violence in Eeyou Istchee."

The group had walked 96 kilometres over four days on an access road as part of the Otihamataau (Let's Take a Step) walk.

Residents of Quebec First Nation don't want an outside police force any more: An alleged incident of police brutality caught on tape affects residents

[Montreal Gazette](#)

August 8, 2013

Christopher Curtis



The SQ's strategy in Unamen Shipu contrasts with the methods of the Ontario Provincial Police. Officers stationed in remote communities in that province must spend up to six years at their post before being transferred. OPP cops are also given courses on aboriginal culture and the police force has a program designed to recruit from Ontario's First Nations. Photograph by: Peter J. Thompson, Peter J. Thompson

MONTREAL — For many of the non-aboriginal police officers who patrol Canada's reserves, their first meaningful encounter with First Nations culture comes when they're wearing a badge and a gun.

It's a fact that can strain the relationship between police and aboriginal communities. This hasn't traditionally been a problem in Quebec, where the vast majority of reserves are staffed with aboriginal police forces.

But residents of one Quebec First Nation say they don't want an outside police force in their town any more after an alleged incident of police brutality was caught on tape.

The video captured what appears to be two Sûreté du Québec officers beating an Innu man in the streets of the remote Unamen Shipu territory. In the shaky footage, one officer pelts the man with baton strikes as he lies on his back squirming. The other police officer has her knee on the suspect's stomach and appears to punch him in the face repeatedly.

Since July, when it was shot, the video has gone viral, prompting an internal investigation. The SQ confirmed Tuesday that the probe could lead to sanctions or even criminal charges against the officers allegedly involved in the beating. However, leaders within the community say that won't be enough.

"At its core, the problem is that the SQ doesn't really understand much, if anything, about this community," said Raymond Bellefleur, the grand chief of Unamen Shipu. "Police come here and they can't speak the Montagnais language and they never stay for more than a week. How can you effectively patrol a place you know nothing about?"

The SQ has been in Unamen Shipu since 2008, when the reserve's local police force was disbanded due to budgetary constraints. Though provincial police maintain a year-round presence in the North Shore village, none of the officers are permanently stationed there.

"We rotate people in and out, some of our people have been in the territory many times but nobody stays long-term," said SQ Sgt. Nathalie Girard. "The staff is constantly changing."

Because officers have to be flown onto the reserve, they usually work for seven to 10 consecutive days before returning to their permanent posting in another region. The short-term nature of their presence in town doesn't give the officers much time to build a relationship with the 1,000 Innu who live in Unamen Shipu, according to Bellefleur.

Before serving as grand chief, Bellefleur was a police officer on the reserve's aboriginal force for 17 years. He acknowledges that the job came with a number of challenges because the reserve's population is disproportionately young and impoverished. But Bellefleur says his force did a more thorough job than the SQ is doing.

"Let's say there was a fight somewhere in town, just by hearing the voice on the call I could tell you exactly where it was and I'd be there in a minute," he said. "Whereas with the SQ, they have to deal with calls coming from people who only

speak Innu. I've tried making a compromise, you know, suggesting that the police at least hire a dispatcher that can speak Innu but I haven't heard back from (police) yet."

The SQ's strategy in Unamen Shipu contrasts with the methods of the Ontario Provincial Police. Officers stationed in remote communities in that province must spend up to six years at their post before being transferred. OPP cops are also given courses on aboriginal culture and the police force has a program designed to recruit from Ontario's First Nations.

"If we can have people in a community that are from that community then it makes for the best possible situation," said Jim Christie, president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. "To a lot of officers who come from say Toronto, the north is Muskoka. It's cottage country just a few hours away. So try 20 hours and a plane ride, it's a shock. So we make an effort to include aboriginal police and to sensitize non-aboriginal police to their new environment."

Christie says the conditions non-aboriginal police face while living on reserve can be extremely trying.

"There's a bit of a fishbowl effect. You're one of maybe two or three officers in town and you're living in a home that's often much nicer than the other houses on the reservation so you're very visible," Christie said. "And on a human level, you're seeing a lot of poverty and that's tough to watch."

Because there are so few cops on the reserve, Christie says OPP officers will often carry their radios with them when they're at home or during a day off. For a lot of those police, it becomes as though they're always on the job, as though they always have to be hyper-aware.

"The last thing you want to do is leave a fellow officer alone, so it's tough to settle down," Christie said. "But I hate to make it seem like it's all bad. A lot of our members go (north) planning on staying for just a few years and they spend their entire careers. They raise families in the north."

It's unclear if the SQ offers its officers any kind of aboriginal culture courses before serving on a reserve since the department only polices six of Quebec's 30 First Nations. However, officers trained at Quebec's national police school in Nicolet do undergo extensive sensitivity training.

"At the end of the day ... it's hard to deny there's a language barrier, a cultural barrier and racial profiling," Bellefleur said. "To me the best way to solve that is to reinstate an aboriginal police force."

International human rights delegation to investigate treatment of First Nations

[Globe and Mail](#)

Aug. 09 2013, 8:00 AM EDT

Mark Hume



The first of three international delegations coming to Canada this year to investigate the treatment of First Nations people has been hearing harrowing tales about women who vanished along British Columbia's infamous Highway of Tears.

Native advocacy groups say 30 aboriginal women have vanished along the desolate stretch of highway in northern B.C. since the 1970s, and they point to the incidents as symptomatic of a larger national problem.

"Well, that's one of the reasons to come, to hear firsthand the experiences of those who have been through this experience, who have lost their mothers, their daughters, their aunts, their sisters," Dinah Shelton, of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, said Thursday during a break in hearings in Prince George.

"These are very difficult stories to hear. And we are taking this hearing seriously. I know the government is as well," said Ms. Shelton, a U.S. law professor who is one of seven commissioners elected to the IACtHR by the general assembly of the Organization of American States.

Ms. Shelton, who is investigating the issue along with another IACtHR commissioner, Tracy Robinson, a lawyer from Jamaica, said in addition to speaking with the families of victims they have held meetings with federal and provincial government officials, the RCMP and native organizations.

"There has been extraordinary co-operation. We've been able to go everywhere and talk to everyone we have wanted to meet with," said Ms. Shelton, whose organization last year sought and received permission from Ottawa to investigate allegations of human-rights abuses in Canada.

"We were in Ottawa. We were in Vancouver yesterday. Today we are in Prince George. We're going back to Vancouver tomorrow and then we will hold a final

conversation with the federal government," said Ms. Shelton, who promised a report by November.

A recent study by the Native Women's Association of Canada found that more than 600 aboriginal women and girls have disappeared or been murdered in Canada in the past 30 years. In a briefing paper to the IACMR last year, the association and two other groups claimed the human rights of native people are being violated because governments "have failed in their obligation to exercise due diligence to adequately prevent violence against aboriginal women and girls."

Native leaders are hoping the visit by the IACMR, and upcoming investigations by two United Nations groups (the special rapporteur on the right of indigenous people and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) will lead to a national public inquiry.

"Up here, or in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Winnipeg, or Edmonton, the common thread is there are a lot of aboriginal women who are the victims of violence," said Tribal Chief Terry Teegee of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council. "What we'd like to see come out of this [flurry of international investigations] is a national inquiry into the problem."

Claudette Dumont-Smith, executive director of the Native Women's Association of Canada, agreed. "I think the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is going to shed new light on this," she said. "They are looking at it through a very different lens and I think they may be able to convince the federal and provincial governments, and the police, that there has to be a different approach to address this issue."

H&M Headdresses Pulled After Aboriginal Complaints

[Huffington Post](#)

August 9, 2013

Chris Purdy



H&M stores across Canada have pulled faux feather headdresses from their shelves after receiving complaints the items are offensive to aborigines. (Getty/H&M)

H&M stores across Canada have pulled faux feather headdresses from their shelves after receiving complaints the items are offensive to aborigines.

Kim Wheeler, an Ojibwa-Mohawk from Winnipeg, said she first saw the \$15 fashion accessories while shopping with her daughter last week at the store in Vancouver's Pacific Centre mall.

"My first instinct was to buy all of them and throw them in the garbage," said Wheeler. "It's not honouring us. It's not flattering us. It's making a mockery of our culture.

"We just don't think it's cool."

The 44-year-old woman, a media relations worker and former employee of The Canadian Press, quickly realized she wasn't prepared to spend that much money to make a point that might not be heard.

Instead, she fired off an email to the company.

"Headdresses are worn by chiefs in some of our communities ... It is a symbol of respect and honour and should not be for sale as some sort of cute accessory. It is not honourable nor flattering.

"People in my community have kind of been fighting that whole 'hipster headdressing' for awhile now."

Emily Scarlett, a Toronto-based spokeswoman for the Swedish fashion chain, said the hair pieces — patterned head bands with bright pink and purple flowers — were part of the company's summer music festival collection called "H&M Loves Music."

Flowered wreaths in honour of the sixties were also part of the line.

"Music festivals these days are really about experimenting with fashion and dressing your personality. And they're very heavily based on accessories, really accessorizing your look."

She said the company received three complaints about the headdresses and quickly made the decision to remove them from the market. An order to remove the items went out Tuesday to its 61 Canadian locations.

"Of course we never want to offend anybody or come off as insensitive," Scarlett said. "We're always about being there for our customers."

Scarlett was unsure if the headdresses would also be removed from H&M stores in other countries.